The Government does not grant exclusive recognition to any single organisation. An open and constructive dialogue is maintained, largely through Indian missions abroad, with a wide-range of NRI organisations.

The Government supports seminars, conferences, etc. for NRIs and PIOs both in India and abroad on a continuous basis. The problems of NRIs and PIOs were reviewed at a series of recent high level meetings in the Government with a view to enabling people of Indian origin to have better access to India and minimise hindrances in their participation in investment in India in areas such as real estate, housing, industry, etc. The Government has set up the office of Commissioner for NRIs for collecting and disseminating information on incentive schemes for NRIs and PIOs in this regard. Besides this, there is an Overseas Indians Cell in the Ministry of External Affairs which looks after the other requirements of NRIs.

Settlement of Compensation Claims of Indian Workers in Iraq

941. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1712 given in the Rajya Sabha on 7th August, 1997 and state:

(a) the details of the compensation claims of Indian workers in Iraq settled as on date under various categories; category-wise;

(b) whether the claim numbers Q/KSC/534891 have since been settled;

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) The details of compensation claims approved by the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) are as follows:

(i) 'A' claims, i.e., claims payable to those who fled from KuwaMraq in the wake of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait but prior to March, 1991—102, 154.

(ii) 'B' claims, i.e., claims for death/ injury—183

(iii) 'C claims, i.e., claims for loss of property upto $100,000—21,371.

(iv) "D' claims.i.e., claims in excess of $100,000—Nil

(v) 'E' claims, i.e., Corporate claims—Nil

(vi) 'F' claims, i.e., Government claims—Nil

Of these claims, moneys were transferred for partial settlement of 18,818 'A' claims @US$2,500/- per claim in March, 1997 and payments against them are presently being made through designated banks.-The balance compensation would be paid on receipt of additional funds from the UNCC. Compensation for settlement of 183 'B' claims was transferred in early 1998 and it has been almost fully disbursed by the designated banks, excluding a small number of claimants who could not be traced. Money, for partial settlement of 5,749 'C claims, amounting to US$14,126,281.87, was remitted by the UNCC last month and is in the process of being paid to eligible claimants through designated banks.

(b) to (d) Claim No. Q/SKC/5348/91 was used on GOI forms which were initially supplied to claimants in 1991 in order to apply for compensation. The UNCC decided in 1992 that all claims for compensation needed to be submitted on separate forms issued by it. The earlier applications on GOI forms carrying No. OQ/SKC/5348/91 were therefore deemed to be invalid.

Bilateral agreement with UAE for transfer of criminals

942. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a dialogue is going on with UAE for entering into a bilateral agreement for transfer of criminals of the respective countries on reciprocal basis;

(b) if so, the present position thereot;

(c) whether the proposed agreement would cover all the criminals; and

(d) if not, the details of the criminals not to be covered under the proposed agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Draft Extradition Treaty was sent to the UAE side in May 1996. The UAE side has suggested some amendments to the draft text. Based on response from the Indian side to the suggested changes, a delegation from the UAE side visited India from 24-25 November 1997 and held discussions with a view to finalising the Agreement.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Details of the crimes to be covered by the proposed Agreement arc under negotiation with the U.A.E.

US Offer for "Strategic' Dialogue"

943. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the connotation of the new US strategy of. having "strategic dialogue" with India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): India and the United States are engaged in an intensive and integrated process of dialogue, including a number of highlcvcl visits. The United States has described this as a "strategic dialogue". The US side defined "strategic dialogue" as "thinking in the future rathcr that discussing the past". Senior US officials have clarified that the "strategic dialogue" with India docs not have any military connotation, and is intended to mean that "the two countries exchange their views not only on bilateral matters but also on regional and global issues and how best we can cooperate in confronting them.

Government's understanding of "strategic dialogue" is that it is a way of continuing indepth and comprehensive discussions on important issues so as to reactivate and upgrade the entire Indo-US relationship through regular exchanges with them.

Irregularities in accounts of Haj Committee

944. SHRI K. REHMAN KHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question-938 given in the Rajya Sabhaa on the 31st July, 1997 and state:

(a) whether any serious irregularities have been pointed out by the auditors in the account of the Haj Committee; and

(b) what are the details of the audit reports and the annual accounts, balance, income and expenditure account for the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The audit of the Haj Committee for the last two years (1995-96 and 1996-97) has not taken place as yet. The detailed report of the audit for 1994-95 and Copies of the annual accounts, balance, income and expenditure accounts of the Haj Committee for the last three years arc given in the Annexure. *[See Appendix 182, Annexure No. 24]*

Effects of U.S. and Russia Accord on India's Nuclear Capability

945. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the accord signed between the US and Russia in September this year for halting production of weapons-grade plutonium in both the countries will have adverse effect on India's nuclear capability; and

(b) if so, whether steps arc being taken to ensure that the country nuclear programme docs not suffer?